Assistance for construction of houses in Karnataka under Mathsya Ashraya-II

2261. SHRI K.B. SHANAPPA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have given approval for construction of 5000 houses under Mathsya Ashraya-II in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the amount released, as on today; and

(c) if not, by when the amount would be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Central assistance of Rs. 450.00 lakh has been released to the Government of Karnataka so far for construction of 5000 houses under Mathsya Asharya-II.

Waiving of loans of farmers

2262. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU AZMI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any demands from the State Government to waive the loans of farmers in their States;

(b) if so, the names of the States which had approached his Ministry in this regard; and

(c) the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Jatropha cultivation

2263. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider exploring the potential of Jatropha as the ideal feedstock for bio-diesel;

(b) whether Jatropha lends itself to all-climate conditions, has low gestation period and high seed yielding potential;

(c) whether according to estimates, Jatropha cultivation on a mere 11 million hectares out of the country's total wasteland area of 63 million hectares has the potential to save around Rs. 20,000 crores on oil import bill; and

(d) whether Government would launch a broad policy initiative on the large scale production of bio-feedstock based on Jatropha?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Committee on Development of bio-fuels constituted by Planning Commission, submitted its report in July, 2003, which, *inter-alia,* recommended large scale plantations of Jatropha on the wastelands for bio-diesel production. Jatropha lends itself to plantation with advantage on land developed on watershed basis and on low fertility marginal, degraded, fallow, waste and other such lands. Jatropha has a gestation period of 2 years and it starts giving economic yield only after 4-5 years depending upon various agro-climatic factors. It has the potential to yield 2-3 MT/ha. under favourable conditions.

(c) The Committee on Development of Bio-fuels has projected that the plantation of Jatropha on 11.19 million ha. of wastelands would provide feedstock for production of 13.38 million MT of bio-diesel for meeting the 20% blending requirement, which in-turn will help in reducing the huge oil import bill.

(d) The draft National Policy on Bio-fuels formulated by Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources envisages utilization of wide range of crops including Jatropha for bio-diesel production.

Joint Action on Agriculture and Health

2264. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a new initiative to create awareness to promote joint action on agriculture and health fronts has